

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 01350 091109Z

ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 /036 W

-----091119Z 084583 /11

R 090956Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 846

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY TEHERAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS AMMAN 1350

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SY, JO, SA

SUBJECT: PROPOSED SYRIA-JORDAN RAILROAD CONNECTION

REF: STATE 41526 (NOTAL), STATE 47037 (NOTAL),
DAMASCUS 1429 (NOTAL)

ATHENS FOR RTDO

1. ACCORDING TO GOJ MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, STATUS OF PROPOSED NEW RAILROAD LINK BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND AMMAN IS AS FOLLOWS: WITH APPROVAL OF SYRIAN-JORDANIAN HIGH COMMITTEE, WHICH IS EXPECTED LATER THIS MONTH, PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENT WILL BE MADE FOR PREPARATION OF FEASIBILITY STUDY AND PRELIMINARY TECHNICAL STUDY OF PROPOSED RAILROAD WORK. FIFTY DAYS TIME WILL BE ALLOWED FOR RESPONSES. SARG AND GOJ OFFICIALS WILL THEN PREPARE SHORT LIST WITHIN ONE MONTH. SHORTLISTED FIRMS WILL BE PROVIDED WITH SCOPE OF WORK AND HAVE THIRTY DAYS TO SUBMIT BIDS. (CONFUSION ON ISSUANCE OF FIRST INVITATION CAUSED BY INTENTION TO PUBLISH IT EARLY THIS MONTH, BUT DEATH OF QUEEN ALIA RESULTED IN PRESENT DELAY.)

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2. RAILROAD IS TO BE STANDARD GAUGE AND WILL RUN ALONG EXISTING RAILBED WHERE PRACTICAL. THIS ROUTE WILL RUN CLOSE TO AREA DESIGNATED FOR JOINT SYRIAN-JORDANIAN FREE ZONE SO THAT FREE ZONE WILL HAVE ACCESS TO IT, BUT IT IS NOW NOT INTENDED FOR NEW RAIL LINK TO RUN THROUGH FREE ZONE. SYRIAN PORTION OF RAIL LINK WILL BE

APPROXIMATELY 115 KILOMETERS AND JORDANIAN PORTION WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 85 KILOMETERS IN LENGTH. SINCE JORDANIAN RAILROAD FROM AMMAN SOUTH IS NARROW GAUGE, SWITCHING YARD WILL BE REQUIRED IN AMMAN, BUT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF NATURE OF SWITCHING YARD WILL AWAIT PROGRESS ON SYRIAN-JORDANIAN LINK. FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR RAIL LINK WILL EMBRACE ENTIRE DISTANCE FROM AMMAN TO DAMASCUS, BUT CONSTRUCTION WILL BE SEPARATED INTO TWO CONTRACTS.

3. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD (WITHOUT CONFIRMATION) THAT SAUDIS ARE CONSIDERING STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY FROM TABUK TO MEDINA ALONG OLD TURKISH HEJAZ RAILWAY. CONSIDERATION MAY ALSO BE GIVEN TO STANDARD GAUGE (1.435 M.) LINKAGE BETWEEN TABUK AND AQABA. INFORMATION SOMEWHAT DOUBTFUL GIVEN ABANDONMENT IN 1960'S BY SAUDIS OF RECONSTRUCTION OF NARROW GAUGE (1.05 M.) TURKISH LINE AND EXCELLENT COMPLETING ROAD NET. WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM JIDDA ON THIS POINT.
PICKERING

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